United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1481
20 September 1993

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, in report on the work of the United Nations, says Organization played a pivotal role in establishing a more stable world order last year; notes gap between demands of Member States and resources provided by them.

+ General Assembly, concluding forty-seventh session, adopts resolutions on Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Peace" and 1994 International Year of the Family.

+ Panel of Inquiry into Harbel massacre says Armed Forces of Liberia planned and executed killings; names three soldiers who should be prosecuted; says other major atrocities should be investigated in the interest of peace and reconciliation.

+ General Assembly elects last three judges for International Tribunal to prosecute serious violations of international humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia.

* * *

The United Nations has played a pivotal role in establishing a more stable world order in the last year, and is now understood to be humanity's best hope for peace, development and human rights, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report on the work of the United Nations dated 10 September, he said the Organization had served as a voice for the poorest countries, a deliverer of humanitarian relief, a guardian of human and minority rights, a rescuer of States in crisis and an instrument for repairing a damaged global environment. There had been substantial achievements in virtually every area, but there had also been serious set-backs and shortcomings as well.

The Secretary-General said three realities had become clear in the last year: the comprehensive nature of the global challenge, the indispensability of the United Nations and the gap between the demands made on the Organization by Member States and the resources provided by them. New levels of political will and intellectual creativity would be required to produce enduring

(more)

For information media---not an official record

achievements, but there was more potential than humanity had ever before conceived possible, he stressed.

Peace, development and democracy were interlocking and mutually reinforcing, the Secretary-General said. Without democracy, no sustainable development could occur; without such development, peace could not be maintained. Development was not just a matter of economic policy and resources; it involved political, social, educational and environmental considerations. He warned that until a new, workable and widely agreed concept of development had been achieved, the United Nations would continue to face a sequence of conflicts.

* * *

The General Assembly today concluded its forty-seventh session by adopting resolutions on the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" and the 1994 International Year of the Family. Under the resolution on "An Agenda for Peace", the Assembly acknowledged the importance of considering the use of preventive deployments and/or the establishment of demilitarized zones for the peaceful settlement of disputes. It reaffirmed that such actions should be undertaken with the consent of, and, in principle, on the basis of a request by, Member States involved. In another resolution, the Assembly decided to devote a plenary meeting of its next session to launch the International Year of the Family and to observe the International Day of Families each 15 May.

During the session, the Assembly adopted a total of 306 resolutions and admitted six new Member States -- Andorra, the Czech Republic, Eritrea, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Monaco and the Slovak Republic. Some 75 per cent of those resolutions had been adopted without a vote, according to a United Nations spokesman. He said a trend appeared to be emerging, noting that only 65 per cent of the previous session's resolutions had been adopted without a vote.

* * *

The Panel of Inquiry set up by the Secretary-General to investigate the massacre of nearly 600 persons near Harbel, Liberia, on 5/6 June has concluded that the killings were planned and executed by units of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). In a document dated 10 September, the Panel named three AFL soldiers who had participated in the massacre, and recommended that criminal investigations be undertaken with a view to prosecuting them. The Security Council had said on 9 June that those responsible for the killings would be held accountable for their actions.

The Panel noted that a few stragglers or deserters from the United Liberation Movement for Democracy of Liberia (ULIMO) may have participated in the massacre on their individual initiative. The Panel cleared ULIMO, and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and the Economic Community of West African States Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), of direct involvement in the killings. However, it went on to say that the AFL's guilt did not

(more)

mitigate or diminsh the responsibility of the NPFL, ULIMO and others alleged to have engaged in similar atrocities against unarmed civilians throughout the conflict. It recommended that a number of major atrocities attributed to all parties to the conflict be investigated in the interest of reconciliation and building a solid foundation for peace.

* * *

The General Assembly has elected the last three of 11 judges to serve on the International Tribunal established to prosecute serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the former Yugoslavia. The judges, who will serve four-year terms as of 17 November, are: Adolphus Godwin Karibi-Whyte (Nigeria), Rustam S. Sidhwa (Pakistan), and Elizabeth Odio Benito (Costa Rica). They were elected on Friday from a list of candidates recommended by the Security Council. Eight judges had already been elected on Wednesday.

In accordance with the Tribunal's Statute, each candidate had to receive an absolute majority of votes from the 184 Member States of the United Nations and the two non-member States with permanent observer missions -- the Holy See and Switzerland. Thus, a candidate had to receive at least 94 votes for election. The observer for the Holy See abstained from voting "in consideration of the Holy See's specific nature" and objectives.

* *** *